

LOVE NOT THE WORLD (BY LANCE LAMBERT)

Galatians 6:14—But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Ephesians 2:1-5—And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest:—but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved).

I John 2:15-17—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Colossians 1:19:23—For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him [Christ] should all the fullness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heaven. And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouvable before him: if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven: whereof I Paul was made a minister.

Can we just have a further word of prayer:

Beloved Lord, we are glad that we are found here in Your presence, and we want very simply, as we come to the ministry of Your word, to confess that without You we can do nothing. Beloved Lord, we need that anointing which alone You can give. And You have not left us without provision for such a time as this. Through the finished work of our Lord Jesus, You have at great cost, provided us with an anointing and made that anointing a glorious reality in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, beloved Lord, by faith we stand into that anointing grace and power for both the speaking of Your word, the translating of it, and the hearing of it. Pierce our hearts, Lord. Somehow meet us. Challenge us. Don't let us be the same. Lord, we are living in incredibly dangerous days. Everything is happening so fast and rapidly deteriorating. We need You, Lord. Speak to our hearts we pray. And we ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. Amen.

The theme of this conference continues really from last year: “The Way to the Eternal Purpose of God—the Cross.” There is *no* alternative to the cross. The only way a human being can be saved is through the work of our Lord Jesus on the cross. And the only way this world can be redeemed, that is the physical world, is through the cross of our Lord Jesus. There is no other way for any child of God to be changed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus. It is simplicity itself. Because it is so simple, we all overlook it. We get into such theological complexity, when Christ crucified is the only way that God has ordained.

WHAT IS THE WORLD?

My responsibility in these few days is the cross and the world. I personally find this a very difficult subject because of the complexity of the way the word *world* is used in English. For instance, that verse in Galatians 6: “But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, through which the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

The Greek word used here is *cosmos*. There are two words that are translated into English by the same English word *world*. One is *cosmos*. This is the whole material universe—everything within it, all the beauty that is in it—the total material universe and all the human beings that inhabit it.

Then there is the other word *eon*. In English we speak of the “eons of time.” This word is sometimes translated age, ages, or periods. It has the feeling of something continuous. And in the Ephesian letter of the apostle Paul, chapter 2:2, you have both words used. This is how he writes: “Wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world.” The word translated *course* in English is *age, eon*—“...according to the *age* of this world.” And quite rightly they have translated it in my version, which I consider a good version, the 1901 American Standard, “according to the *course* of this world, the *duration* of this world.” Something has happened. Both these words have acquired, on the whole, an unfavorable meaning in the Bible.

Consider for instance, Galatians 1:4: “Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world [age], according to the will of our God and Father.”

Then, as we have already said in Ephesians 2:2-3: “Wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world [cosmos].” Then he goes on to describe this world: “According to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath.”

The same idea is in the first letter of the apostle John in chapter 2:15: “Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The word here is *cosmos*. “Love not the world and the things that are within the world.” What does John mean? Think of what God Himself said in John 3:16a, “For God so loved the world [cosmos].” Something has happened to this world. That is what I mean when I said these two Greek words, on the whole, have acquired a very unfavorable, almost dark meaning in the word of God. Of course John was always black and white. There were never any shades between the two. But he explains himself, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away” (I John 2:16-17a).

Then again, look at the book of James. James was another very stark person, and this is how he puts it in James 4:4, speaking to Christians: “Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.”

These are tough words, exceedingly surreal. “You adulteresses, you have broken your marriage covenant with God. You have given yourself to another spirit, a worldly spirit, the spirit that is in this world.” Then he uses the word *enmity*. I like better the New American Standard Bible translation *hostility*. It is the same idea, an enemy of God. Rather strong, isn’t it?

WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS WORLD?

What then has happened to this world that God created? This is the word that the Lord said as it is recorded in Genesis 1:31: “And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.” What has happened? Apparently, when the world was first created, it was pure; it was the work of God. What then has happened? Well, we have the fall of Satan and a third of the angels,

and the fall of man. This fall, beginning with Satan and the angels, and moving into Adam and Eve, into the human being, substantially and essentially changed and altered this world. Something entered into the world that was altogether other than God. You remember how the apostle Paul said, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against hosts of wicked spirits in the heavenly places” (see Ephesians 6:12).

When God created man, he was the apex of the natural creation. I think of it as a triangle. At the very bottom are all the creatures that Darwin called primeval, but still created by God. Then you have the fish, the reptiles, the bugs, and all the other things as you come up. Then you have the birds, the animals, and the mammals, the nearest in one sense to the human being. And then you have man. That was a triangle. But the other triangle came down from heaven—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The idea was that the Spirit of God would dwell in that human being, and that the whole world would be governed and supervised by man.

This is not so crazy as it may seem. After all, how did Noah get all those animals into the ark? Have you ever thought about it? I have three dogs and three cats and it is enough to get them into the house. How did he get them in unless he was able to communicate? The fear of man was not in the animal creation until the flood.

When man fell, it was as if the hub of the wheel was torn out, as if the very heart of the practical energizing of the universe was destroyed. Man, instead of being a God-centered, God-conscious, and God-dependent being, became a self-centered, self-conscious being, a self-dependent being. And from that point, you have human history as we know it. Everywhere it is man—I, I, I; my aggrandizement, my glory, and my fulfillment; everything to do with man. He builds empires for his glory. It is humanism, the last great antichrist philosophy of this world—six, six, six—fallen man, fallen man, and everything in it, fallen man. God intends to sum up everything in Christ. In order to take man, Satan wants to sum up everything in man, fallen man, man in union with spirits and demons. This is no fairy tale. When man fell, the world acquired a new character. It was substantially and essentially altered. Of course, I must tell you that this world is still very beautiful, but it has been essentially and substantially altered. It is indwelt by Satan.

Some of you may say that I am going a little too far. Really? Why do you think Satan is called the prince of this world? (see John 12:31.) Why do you think that all these things we read about happened to the world? Why did it change?

Genesis 3:17-19 says, “And unto Adam He [God is speaking] said, Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hath eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Something happened when man fell—thorns and thistles. Sometimes, people come to me and say, “Were mosquitoes and flies a result of the fall? Were cockroaches, especially those huge ones, a result of the fall? Where did they all come from?” Of course, if you were to say, “Take them out,” the whole cycle of nature would be altered. But something happened when man fell. In John’s, first letter, chapter 5:19b he says, “The whole world [cosmos] lieth in the evil one.” We can still see such beauty in this world. When the beauty of this world first makes its impact upon us, we worship God. We also know that though man himself has fallen, still he was made in the image of God. Still there is an imprint deep within the human being. Even when he is depraved, even when he is perverted, even when he is fallen, still there is the imprint. It is amazing!

This demonic change is most clearly seen in man. Romans 12:2 says, “And be not fashioned according to this world.” This is not *cosmos*; this is *eon*. Be not fashioned, be not molded, be not

formed by this age. But we all are; we are in the mold. And even when we become Christians, so many find it impossible to get out of the mold. The apostle is speaking to believers, not the unsaved. He says, “Be not fashioned according to this world.” Get out of the mold. Don’t let this age form you, your outlook, your mindset.

“And be not fashioned according to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” That means another mindset. “Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Follow it; it is another mindset.

THE GREAT DESTROYER OF THE CHURCH

Do you know what the biggest problem in the Christian life is? The mold of this world, the fashion of this world. It stunts the Christian life, paralyzes it, and spoils it. It finally corrupts it and in the end destroys it. Then you have become a monument, a gravestone. Once you were saved, once you walked with the Lord, but somehow or other, you lost it all. You do not hear the Lord anymore. You do not see the Lord anymore. You are not alive to the Lord anymore.

It is the same with the church. The greatest destroyer of the church is the mindset of this world. Oh, how many times I have heard it in the gatherings of the church: “We must use common sense.” What do they mean by common sense? They mean the mindset of the world. I will tell you what common sense is. If God is God, therefore, there is nothing impossible. And if the Lord Jesus has been given to us as Head of the church, genuine common sense means we hear what the Head is saying. Otherwise, this other mindset destroys the church. We become affluent, complacent, in a word, Laodicean. We have the Lord’s Table, we have Bible studies, we have prayer meetings, and we have evangelistic outreach. We have the whole regime, but the Lord Jesus is outside knocking, and nobody knows it. These are the most plaintive, moving word of Jesus: “If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me.”

I am sure if we had members of the church of Laodicea here and asked them, “Do you believe you are overcomers?” they would say, “Yes, we know the Lord. We are saved. We have wonderful Bible teachings, the best of the bunch, marvelous. Really, we are a pretty alive church, you know. I think we are overcomers.” And they do not even know that the Lord Jesus is outside, neither the deacons, nor the elders nobody.

The Lord Jesus never said, “If a whole number of you will open the door.” He came down to one person: “If any man.” The mindset of this world, the mold of this world is the paralysis of the church. It is why every movement of the Spirit of God since Pentecost has died within generations. Not one has remained alive in its original condition. They all died. Why? It is the mindset of the world that has taken over. It is being fashioned according to this world. Brothers and sisters, I believe this is a very serious matter.

Look at the work of the Lord. Why does it become routine? The fire has gone. The apostle Paul said to Timothy, “Stir into flame the gift that is in you.” Why had it died? Why does it become powerless? It is the same problem. It is the world, and it is the most seductive way Satan can use to destroy the work of God.

Of course, it is absolutely true that there are all kinds of worldly things, and we can separate ourselves from them, such as smoking. “I do not smoke. I am a believer.” I was in a church once where they never went to a film, never went to theatres, never listened to an orchestra, never smoked. (Most of them did not know what tobacco smoke smelled like.) They never drank alcohol. Even at the Lord’s Table there was that dreadful sacramental wine that so many believers use now, having changed the Lord’s word to us. It is so sad. I always wonder how the church in Corinth got drunk on that sacramental wine, but that’s another matter. But these people that I was among really believed they were separated from the world, but the real world was very much alive—jealousy,

back biting, unforgiving spirit, bitterness, faction, division, ambition. All those things were right in it. You can separate from outward things of the world, and I am not saying that you should not, because if the Lord speaks to you, you must obey Him. If He says, “Give up your sport,” you must give it up or you will not grow because that sport can be an idol. It is the world, and so I could go on.

“The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” The word *life* here is not the word that is used of eternal life, or spiritual life; it is *bios* from which we get the word *biology* or *biological*. This kind of life—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride, the vain glory, the boastful pride of life, as one of the versions puts it, the natural life is the world.

REDEMPTION FOR MAN AND THE WORLD

My subject is the cross and the world. Do you know (I sometimes think many Christians are ignorant of it) that when Jesus died, He laid the ground for the redemption of this world, that is the natural world, the physical world? Not only did He die for human beings, but He died even for the natural creation, to redeem them from the curse, to redeem them from the emptiness and futility of their existence. Actually, we have no idea what God originally intended with the natural creation, but what I say is biblical. We have to be careful, but it is biblical. I am not asking you to go and hug trees. I am just saying that the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus extends not only to the human beings, but to the whole natural creation.

Colossians 1:19-20 says, “For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him [Christ, Messiah] should all the fulness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens.”

Romans 8:18-22 says, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation [the natural creation] waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity [to futility], not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”

So it does. For those who have ears to hear, this whole natural creation groans and travails. It fell not of its own will but because of man. And it waits for the fruit of the cross when the redeemed will come to that place, and then the whole natural creation will burst into life, into glory.

We often forget something in Revelation 4 and 5, where the little Lamb is in the throne, as if just slaughtered, and that great cry goes out: “Worthy art Thou for Thou has redeemed us with Your blood from every tongue and kindred and nation.” Then it goes on and then all the angels—myriads and myriads of angels praise Him. Then in chapter 5:13-14a it says, “And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb (there is the cross) be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. And the four living creatures (the four living ones) said, “Amen.”

A NEW CREATION

I do not know how many of you have ever thought about the cherubim. You find them in Ezekiel, wheels within wheels. They go any way—up, down, sideways, backwards, forwards. If you look outward it is man; on one side it is ox; look the other side it is lion; look inside it is eagle. They are the same living creatures that are around the throne in Revelation 4 and 5. They are not angels.

Seraphim are angels; cherubim are not angels. What are they? I always remember Mr. Sparks saying that he thought and thought and puzzled and puzzled over these cherubim. And he said the one thing they are not is those little chubby babies that you see with little wings. But he said, and I think he followed G.H. Pember in this, “It is the whole creation—the animal creation, the bird creation, the domestic animals, the wild animals, and man as well—redeemed by the grace of God. So here is something wonderful, “a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.” The demonic principle of sin has gone, and in its place is righteousness. It is wonderful!

Man has been gloriously saved by the work of Christ crucified. The cross is the way to glory. Isn't it wonderful in Ephesians, when it speaks about walking according to the course of this world, according to the power of the air, the spirit that now dwells in the sons of disobedience, and there was no hope for us. But God, being rich in mercy made us alive together with Christ. How did He make us alive? Through the work of the cross. He took one old man and crucified him. He took an old creation and crucified it. It is a new creation, a new man, a new man in the Messiah. (If you read on in Ephesians 2 you will come to it.) It is so wonderful; it is the work of the cross; the cross and the redemption. Now, this new man is Christ-centered, Christ-conscious, and Christ-dependent.

Galatians 6:14 says, “But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” This is the only way that you can give the Lord Jesus the preeminence in your life and in your service, the only way that He can be the living, functional, practical Head of the church, the only way you can serve God. It is the only way the mindset of the world can be broken, the mold of this age broken, our minds renewed and thus transformed to prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Let me finish by asking a question. If you are a leader, if you are responsible for other lives, is the world crucified to you and you to the world? Dear child of God, you young person, is the world crucified to you and you to the world? You are playing with the wrong kind of fire if you are playing with the world. It will corrupt you, seduce you, and destroy you. Listen.

Shall we pray:

Beloved Lord, touch our hearts. Don't let us be the same people, sermon tasting. Deliver us from academic knowledge. Lord, face us. Don't let us escape. We want in these days to go on into all Your purpose. We want to see Your eternal purpose fulfilled. And we want to pray, Lord, let us be involved in the fulfillment. If it means we must lose our self-life, as it does, may Your Holy Spirit energize us to let go of that self-life. Hear us, Lord. We ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

the World

Love Not